

GREATER FALL RIVER VOCATIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF SICK BANK SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING
251 STONEHAVEN ROAD, FALL RIVER, MA
DISTRICT OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM
JUNE 15, 2023

In attendance: Rajiv Nehra of Fall River and Fr. Jay Mello of Fall River

Absent: Joan Menard of Fall River

Also in attendance: Paul Jennings, SC Member, Jeffrey Begin, SC Member, Brian Bentley, Interim Superintendent-Director, Andrew Rebello, Assistant Superintendent-Principal, Paul Kitechen, Director of Finance and Operations, Gregory Brilhante, Legal Counsel, Mitchell Sweet, DTA President, Jonathan Root, DTA , Helena Neves, Executive Secretary

Remote attendance: Linda Silvia, Decio Matos, Stacey Matos

The meeting began with a roll call at 5:01 pm

It was moved by Fr. Jay, seconded by Dr. Nehra and voted unanimously to dispense with the reading of the May 17, 2023 minutes and approve them as recorded.

Dr. Nehra stated that three requests to access sick bank days were submitted by Andrea Case, Suzanne Raposo and Linda Silvia. The required medical documentation to support the requests was submitted by the three staff members.

Dr. Nehra asked under what guidelines or pretext would a request for retroactive sick bank days be granted. Mr. Bentley stated that if a DTA staff member is out of sick time, they can request access to sick bank days as long as they provide a doctor's note. The request to access the sick bank days is at times submitted after the employee returns to work and it could take up to three weeks by the time the sub-committee meets.

Attorney Brilhante stated that in the past sick bank days were not granted for a minor illness, such as strep throat. The intent of the sick bank was to be used for serious illnesses or medical reasons that required the employee to take an extended amount of time off work. Attorney Brilhante further stated that Ms. Raposo's request meets the requirements of the sick bank guidelines due to her pregnancy.

Fr. Jay asked if employees are offered long or short term disability insurance. Attorney Brilhante stated typically yes and sick bank days can be used once all sick days are exhausted to offset the difference in pay. Dr. Nehra asked if it typical and customary for the employer to absorb the difference in pay. Attorney Brilhante stated that most employers allow employees to use earned sick time to make their pay whole.

Fr. Jay asked how many sick bank days an individual earns and how are they tracked. Mr. Sweet stated that if an individual has been employed for ten years and has not used any sick bank days, they would have earned a maximum of fifty days. Attorney Brilhante stated that in Ms. Raposo's case she has accessed the sick bank in the past and would only be able to request the number of days she has

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earned. Mr. Bentley stated that sick bank days are tracked through the business office. A discrepancy was found and it is being corrected.

It was moved by Fr. Jay seconded by Dr. Nehra and voted unanimously to approve the request by Ms. Raposo to use sick bank days contingent on the number of days she has available and not to exceed fifty days.

Mr. Sweet expressed concern regarding personal and medical information being discussed in an open forum and requested that the committee not continue the discussion due to confidentiality concerns. Attorney Brilhante stated that each individual's name was listed on the agenda, therefore it making it public and would need to be addressed in open session.

Attorney Brilhante stated that the sick bank subcommittee has always reviewed and discussed requests in open session but agreed that policies and procedures need to be in place to protect an individual's confidentiality. Mr. Sweet agreed but was concerned with delaying the request by Ms. Case and Ms. Silva due to the end of the fiscal year.

It was moved by Fr. Jay seconded by Dr. Nehra and voted unanimously to table the requests by Ms. Case and Ms. Silvia in light of the request for confidentiality.

Mr. Sweet expressed concern that Ms. Silvia's request was tabled at the May meeting and is being tabled again. Ms. Silvia is currently on an unpaid leave due to her sick bank request not being reviewed. Attorney Brilhante stated that in order to take up Ms. Silvia's request at today's meeting a discussion would need to take place due to conflicting doctor's notes.

Attorney Brilhante suggested that the subcommittee meet in July to discuss Ms. Case and Ms. Silvia's requests in executive session and to put in place a procedure for future requests. Mr. Sweet asked if the any votes by the subcommittee need to be presented to the full School Committee for approval. Attorney Brilhante stated it has been past practice but it is not listed in the contract and it doesn't have to. Mr. Sweet was in agreement to schedule a meeting in July.

It was moved by Fr. Jay seconded by Dr. Nehra and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 5:21 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Helena S. Neves
Helena S. Neves, Executive Secretary